

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to cancel Claims 1 - 16 and add new Claims 17 - 36 as follows, this listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 - 16 (Cancelled)

17. (New) An actuating element mounted on an electrical appliance in such a way that it can pivot about a pivoting axis in the switching direction of a switch in order to switch a function of an electrical appliance by actuating a switch and comprises a slide provided with an actuating surface which is displaceably guided along a slide path provided on the actuating element in order to adjust an operating parameter, the slide path and the pivoting axis extending substantially parallel to one another.

18. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the slide path and the pivoting axis are arranged so that they run in a plane wherein a normal to the actuating surface of the slide is located.

19. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the slide path is arranged so that it runs above the pivoting axis.

20. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the pivoting axis runs through two bearing eyes which are constructed on the actuating element in opposing tabs between which the slide path runs and engage in the two pivot pins disposed on the electrical appliance.

21. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the slide is mounted on a surface section of the actuating element which extends starting from the pivoting axis away from the switch in such a manner that a force introduced via the actuating surface of the slider is introduced into the actuating element in the direction opposite to the switching direction.

22. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the slide is mounted on a surface section of the actuating element which extends starting from the pivoting axis in the direction of the switch and the actuating surface of the slide is embodied in position and shape in such a manner that the force introduced into the actuating surface runs through the pivoting axis.

23. (New) The actuating element according to claim 22, wherein the actuating surface of the slide is embodied as flat and has an inclination with respect to the surface section of the actuating element at which a force introduced into the actuating surface acts in a direction which intersects the pivoting axis.

24. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, wherein the slide path is predefined by a slit-shaped opening in the actuating element through which the slide is guided along its slide path on the actuating element.

25. (New) The actuating element according to claim 24, wherein in order to transfer its movement along the slide path onto a slide regulator disposed on the electrical appliance, the slide is connected to an arm which acts on the slide regulator.

26. (New) The actuating element according to claim 25, wherein the arm projects through the slit-shaped opening and is supported on the electrical appliance to intercept forces acting in the direction of switching, introduced via the actuating surface of the slide.

27. (New) The actuating element according to claim 25, wherein the arm has a projection which engages between two entraining elements connected to the slide regulator which transmit the movement of the slide along the slide path onto the slide regulator.

28. (New) The actuating element according to claim 27, wherein the entraining elements have a minimum size at which the projection of the arm slidingly engages the entraining elements in each pivoting position of the sliding element.

29. (New) The actuating element according to claim 27, wherein the entraining elements are provided on a pivoted link which sits on a spindle mounted on the electrical appliance which converts the sliding movement of the pivoted link into a rotary movement to actuate a rotary potentiometer.

30. (New) The actuating element according to claim 25, wherein the arm has a spring-elastic locating lug supported on the inside of the actuating element which secures the arm of the slide inserted in the slit-shaped opening from outside the actuating element against pulling out.

31. (New) The actuating element according to claim 17, further comprising a pre-tensioning element pre-tensioning the actuating element in the direction opposite to the switching direction with a force larger than that required to displace the slide, which is introduced into the actuating element in the switching direction.

32. (New) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- a housing;
- an actuating element mounted on the housing for pivotal movement with respect to the housing about a pivot axis;
- a slit-shaped opening extending along an outer surface of the actuating element;
- a switch disposed within the housing and being actuated in response to movement of the actuating element to control a function of the vacuum cleaner; and
- a slide mounted for translational movement with respect to the housing along a slide path to adjust an operating parameter of the vacuum cleaner, the slide being disposed adjacent the outer surface of the actuating element and having an arm extending through the slit-shaped opening.

33. (New) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 32, wherein the slide path and the pivoting axis extending substantially parallel to one another.

34. (New) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 32, wherein the actuating element includes a front surface section and a rear surface section wherein the slide is disposed adjacent the rear surface section, the pivot axis being disposed between the arm and the front surface.

35. (New) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 32, wherein the slide is slidably supported by the housing, the actuating element being free to pivot with respect to the slide.

36. (New) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 32, further comprising:

an entraining element connected to an end of the arm within the housing and at least partially forming an engaging slit;

a spindle mounted for rotation about an axial pin and having spiral-shaped flanges extending outwardly from the axial pin, the entraining element engaging the flanges at least partially within the engaging slit and the spindle rotating about the axial pin in response to translational movement of the slide; and

a rotary potentiometer coupled to the spindle and receiving rotary input from the axial pin.